

New Toll-Free Pilot Program Helps Those Without

Internet Get Information on Health Professionals

Virginians who don't have access to the Internet can now get information on health care professionals by using a new special toll-free telephone number in a six-month pilot program implemented October 31. The Virginia Department of Health Professions (DHP) in collaboration with 2-1-1 VIRGINIA to implement this important service.

Beginning October 31, 2006, citizens can dial "211" toll free and ask for information such as the status of the provider's license and whether any actions have been taken on an individual's license by one of Virginia's thirteen health regulatory boards seven days a week from 8:15 a.m. – 12 midnight.

Dialing 2-1-1 connects the caller to a trained professional, who can listen to the situation and suggest resources using one of largest databases for health and human services information in Virginia.

Prior to 2-1-1-Virginia the information was only available through the Department's website or through telephone calls to the Department directly.

Health professional included in this feature of the program include: doctors, nurses, dentists, chiropractors, veterinarian, occupational therapists, physical therapists, social workers, licensed professional counselors, psychologists, audiologists, optometrists, pharmacists, funeral directors and all other licensees of the Department of Health Professional.

Additional information is also available on doctors (medicine, osteopathy and podiatry) licensed in Virginia, such as office hours and location and whether languages other than English are spoken in the doctor's office. All information provided through 2-1-1 VIRGINIA is made available by DHP through its website, www.dhp.virginia.gov.

In an effort to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse population of the Commonwealth, all information provided through 2-1-1 VIRGINIA will be available in English as well as twenty four other languages. Virginia Relay will be available hearing impaired callers.

DHP hopes that by partnering with 2-1-1 VIRGINIA, everyone throughout Virginia will have ready access to information that will enable them to make more informed health care decisions for themselves and their loved ones.

2-1-1 VIRGINIA providers include: Council of Community Services (Roanoke), Family Resource & Referral Center (Staunton), The Planning Council (Norfolk), United Way of Central Virginia (Lynchburg), and United Way of Greater Richmond & Petersburg (Richmond).

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Coordinated through the Virginia Department of Social Services, in partnership with the Virginia Alliance for Information & Referral Systems (VAIRS), 2-1-1 VIRGINIA is an easy to remember, free telephone number connecting people with information on available community services. 2-1-1 VIRGINIA and localized or specialized Information & Referral centers share a common mission of serving their communities. They seek to improve access to community health and human services and to serve as community barometers to indicate insufficient resources and gaps in service.